

CLAIMS:

1. Apparatus for capillary isoelectric focusing, comprising:

a separation capillary filled with a migration medium in which fluorescent analytes migrate or are in stationary equilibrium;

a laser light source for axial irradiation of said capillary at one end thereof to excite said fluorescent analytes; and

whole column imaging detection means for monitoring the isoelectric focusing process,

wherein said separation capillary is made of a material having a sufficiently low refractive index that the intensity of laser light scattered from the walls of said separation capillary is negligible relative to the fluorescence of the analytes in the migration medium.

2. Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said capillary material is a fluorinated polyalkene.

3. Apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said fluorinated polyalkene is selected from the group consisting of polytetrafluoroethylene and fluorinated ethylene-propylene copolymers.

4. Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said separation capillary is a section of fused silica glass capillary tubing having a interior coating of a low refractive index material.

5. Apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising a section of optical fibre extending into said one end of the separation capillary and outwardly toward and in alignment with said laser light source, for directing

irradiating light from the laser axially into the lumen of the capillary.

6. Apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising a screen interposed between said one end of the separation capillary and said light source, having a central pinhole to allow the close passage therethrough of said section of optical fibre.

7. Apparatus according to claim 3, claim 5 or claim 6, wherein said whole column imaging detection means comprises a charge-coupled device camera coupled to an ultraviolet transparent lens.